CONCLUSION
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This study of the process of urbanization in the Narmada Valley of Madhya Pradesh has been designed keeping in view only one objective. What factors have determined the rise and growth of towns in this region down the ages? What were the historical reasons and what were the geographical determinants? What are the patterns of spatial distribution? Last but not least, what are the prospects for further urban growth?

Physiographically, the region is a flat valley flanked by rough and elevated mountain ranges. Being the valley of a major river which is almost never deficient in water, its soils are fertile while the climate is favourable to agriculture. No wonder that this region has been the cradle of many a kingdom and dynasty and it continues to be in the forefront of economic growth even today.

There are definite indications, provided mostly by the recent archaeological excavations and explorations, that the first civilized man roamed this valley in circa 2000 B.C. The first urban or proto-
urban settlement—Maheshwar—dates back to circa 1000 B.C. It is still a flourishing town of Khargone district, positively the oldest in the whole of this Valley.

Defence served as the basic rationale behind the establishment of a town all through the ancient and the medieval periods, almost to the beginning of the British period. All the older towns grew under the shadow of castles and forts, by river side, wherever the scarps and gaps in the mountains permitted urban growth. Mahishmati—present day Orchha Mandhata—a well-known place of pilgrimage on the Narmada river, Khandwa and Jabalpur trace their history to the ancient times. The Muslim rulers of the medieval period founded and promoted a number of towns, the best known being Hoshangabad, Harda, Handia, Khargone and Kukshi.

The picture underwent a sea-change with the advent of the British. The establishment of a strong central authority in the wake of the 1859 Uprising obviated the need to plan keeping defence in mind. At the same time, India’s industrial revolution also started, largely caused by the same factors. This necessitated a rapid development
of transport and communication facilities. Bulk of the modern Narmada Valley towns, consequently, came into being in the later half of the last and the first decades of the present centuries. Location by the side of a river no longer remained necessary. On the contrary, propinquity to the trunk railway and road routes became a far more relevant consideration. Itarsi and Timarni can be cited as instances of the newly-emerging towns. The best example of a town growing beyond recognition due to fast industrial growth is Jabalpur. On the other hand, towns like Narsinhabpur suffered eclipse when they failed to fit in the new pattern.

After delving into the geographical and historical factors affecting the process of urbanization, attention was paid to the distribution and growth of urban population. First of all, parameters of urban growth were isolated and identified. It was found that population and the physical size of the town were the two chief variables in terms of which the growth of a town could be scientifically and reliably measured. The seven decades covered by the present work can be divided into two clearly discernible periods: the period of slow growth (1901-21) and the period of recovery (1921-1971). Finally, a decade-wise
analysis of the growth of towns was undertaken, demonstrating the mean value and the Standard Deviation with the help of scatter-diagrams. One diagram has been prepared to show the changes of rank according to the population size varying over the entire period of seven decades.

A study of the locational factors follows in the next chapter. The chief finding in this respect has been the following. The same factors which promoted the growth of towns under certain circumstances tend to obstruct the growth after a certain point is reached. Taking Narasimhapur as the example, it has been shown how the contiguity of the river was among the basic reasons for the founding of this town. However, the same river is now obstructing its expansion in one direction. A typology of urban locations was developed and a number of urban situations were closely scrutinised with a view to identify the helpful and the hindering factors.

The next chapter exclusively deals with the need for a composite index of urbanization. After pointing
out the lacunae in the available index, an altogether new index has been evolved by broadbasing the relevant parameters. The index proposed by the author includes density, rate of literacy and the proportion of non-agricultural workers, which seem to affect the very character of a town but which have by and large been neglected by the geographers. The index was developed after drawing the correlation obtaining among these parameters and ascertaining that only those factors are included which have a distinctly high positive correlation.

A centrographical analysis of the distribution of urbanization has been taken up in the next chapter. Spread over the first seven decades of this century, mean centres of both the urban population and the urban places have been determined. Only by the employment of this technique could one explicate the impact of the town of Jabalpur on the process of urbanization in this region. Herein lies the justification for undertaking this minute analysis. In addition to precise quantifications, rational bases for the shift of the two centres and the consequences of this shift have also been fully discussed.
Migration provides a clue to the urban status of a town. If a town appears to be attracting a greater number of migrants than other towns of the region, that town can safely be regarded as the premier town of the region. The next chapter, therefore, embodies an analysis of migration-patterns relating to the various towns. If it is accepted that a town which draws migrants from other towns is relatively of a higher urban status, one will have to say that no town in this region belongs to that category since the bulk of migration to towns is from the rural areas.

The penultimate chapter is devoted to the evaluation of urbanization as an economic process. After categorising the towns of this region according to the dominant occupations and functions, another index—Functional Specialization Index—has been developed by suitably modifying and adapting an available index. The present author differs in one significant respect from the author of the index available. He has not only dealt with the parameters singly but has also gone one step forward by combining them with the help of a single cartographical representation. Moreover unlike the previous work, adequate
attention has been paid to the rural and total popula-
lation also. In the absence of this latter information,
it will not be possible to see the source of economic
movement and the reason why one place seems to have
greater potential for development than the others. By
a diagrammatic representation, the changing mean value
of the source of the increase in particular occupations
too has been shown.

The final chapter concerns itself with
projecting the prospects of urban development in this
region. A number of towns have apparently reached the
optimum development and any further increase will
necessarily bring down the quality of life. On the
other hand, there are certain towns whose growth has
been stunted and which can easily share the burden of
increasing urbanization if certain constraints are
removed. A planner of urban development would pay a
great deal of attention to the maintenance of a kind
of urban balance. The foregoing chapters, particularly
the one dealing with the cartographical analysis, have
shown that owing to an inordinate growth of a single
town, the regional urban growth has become topsy-turvy.
The region can have a better prospect of developing into one of the prosperous ones if the imbalance is corrected by guiding the growth of its towns in a pre-planned manner. Certain lines of development can be suggested.

The Prospects

From all accounts, the Narmada Valley is on the threshold of a minor urban revolution. The long-standing dispute regarding the utilisation of Narmada waters appears to be in sight of an equitable solution. Schemes for harnessing these waters are already on the drawing-board. It will indubitably be one of the more ambitious projects conceived by your planners and engineers to change the entire landscape of a region. However, while a scheme like the Rajasthan Canal added only to the growth of agriculture; the Narmada Valley Project, as it is being visualised at the moment, will promote both agriculture and industry. Thus, its impact on the growth of urbanism will be considerable. It will not be out of place to say a few words about this prospect before we end this work.
Every river valley project necessarily creates condition in which new towns take birth and existing towns grow. The reason appears to be two-fold, pertaining to the two stages of activities involved. A small, and sometimes even medium-sized, township has got to be set-up at the project-site before the work can even begin in full steam. Thousands of workers and their families are gathered at one place. This partly involves migration from distant places and partly that from the adjoining areas, in addition to the local populace. All kinds of facilities and utilities—water-supply, electricity, supply of all kinds of consumer-goods, and social services like those connected with health and education—have also to be either arranged for or strengthened, requiring more and more non-agricultural workers. Thus, for a number of years, a well-organised (since the efficiency of the labour-force is admittedly linked with the degree of this organization) town remains in existence. The duration of this existence varies, but is not likely to be less than five to seven years, and is usually more than that.

Once the project is completed, the next stage begins. The type of works envisaged under the Narmada
Valley Project are all multi-purpose. First reservoirs and dams will be built; then hydro-electric turbines are erected on the one hand and irrigation canals are constructed on the other. The latter will help the parched lands and ensure two crops where one grew before. From the point of view of urbanization, both these processes are relevant. In a region started for power or dependent only on thermal power, availability of abundant amount of hydro-electric power will necessarily attract industry. Along with this, growth of agriculture will also necessitate the setting up of new service-centres/mandis or hasten the process of the growth of the existing ones.

The Narmada Valley project envisages not one but a series of such projects dotted over the entire valley in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Since the final shape has yet to emerge, and will take sometime emerging, we can work only on the basis of hypothetical projections as published from time to time. While the Jal-Sindhi dam, lying in Gujarat but submerging a good deal of Madhya Pradesh's fertile land, is outside our scope, several other dams - Hiranphal, Barwaha, Panasa, Hosangabad,
Chinki, Bargi, and Basania on the main river and Kodar, Tawa, Barna, Sitarwa, Seara and Badnera on the tributaries - fall within our scope. Some of these are bound to affect both the growth and composition of the existing towns, some of them even outside the Valley. Thus, Barwaha and Punasa - the latter being one of the biggest - are within reach of Indore town to the north and Khandwa to the south. These towns will have to serve as the base-towns for the purpose of construction. Similarly, Bhopal, cut of the Valley like Indore, will be affected by Kodar, Itarsi and Hoshangabad by Hoshangabad and Tawa dams, and Jabalpur by Bargi.

When the hydro-electric generation will be in full swing from these multi-purpose projects, the nearby towns will become the first beneficiaries. On one hand they will get as much power as they need for further and rapid industrialisation. On the other, the workers - by and large agricultural workers turned non-agricultural - will also become available for absorption as factory labour. They would be highly-trained and organised workers. All these factors will, in all likelihood, change the urban situation of the Valley very materially.
Having drawn this futurological picture, one must also put in a word of caution. Since planned development is the accepted state policy, one must make sure that no aspect of future growth is allowed unplanned. A detailed blue-print must be prepared in advance, a kind of Master Plan, for the urban growth of this region. This is necessary for the following reasons. First, Valley towns like Jabalpur have already reached the optimum level of urban development as envisaged by almost all the experts in this field. The town is apparently getting congested, civic services becoming less efficient and even inadequate in certain areas. The process of natural growth, tagged to population rise, will make it more so even without adding any new industry. Secondly, there are other towns, like Timarni, Narasimhapur and Barwani, which seem to have ample growth-potential but whose growth has either been stunted due to certain factors connected with faulty town-planning or which have just been ignored by the industrialists. These are all very well served by rail and road, have scope for lateral development after providing some bridges and roads as also better civic amenities. There is no reason why some industries should not be diverted to these
towns. Thirdly, which town develops and which does not no longer depends on free enterprise. Left to himself, an industrialist will always look for the most convenient place - convenient from the point of view of raw-material, transport and communication, availability of labour force, climate and local conditions - and not for one which needs incentive for development. An equitable regional balance can not be regarded as a motivating force behind the capitalist investments. Only the State can both feel concerned about it and provide for it. Since no industry can be set up without first obtaining a licence from the government, the latter could always decide upon the regions or centres to be industrialised. In the present picture, the government will also be the supplier of the life-blood of all industry-electric power.

These factors appear to point towards only one conclusion: the government must ensure that it has in its possession a detailed study and survey of the region from the point of view of future urbanization. Towns and large villages with growth-potential must be identified. The parameters that should go into this kind of exercise must
include both profitability of the ventures and the need for a balanced urban development. In addition, and this needs being stressed in the opinion of the present writer since this is the aspect often neglected, due attention should be paid to the status of the different towns of the Valley. The Index of Urbanization as suggested in the foregoing (Chapter V) may be found useful for this purpose. Locational factors (Chapter IV) relating to all the major and minor towns of the region should also be closely gone into to ascertain the specifically local reasons for the establishment and growth of a town. It is really a pity that, in the absence of a comprehensive work embracing all the urban centres of this region, a clear picture of these reasons could not emerge earlier to guide the work of the town-planners. Towns are for the people and not vice versa. Only what appears to make for a more comfortable, easy urban life, dictates the choice of the location these days. The situation was different when defence was the prime consideration (Chapter II). Concern for the people is the sole criterion for not only locating a new town but also for encouraging the growth of the existing ones.